

Worcestershire and Herefordshire Local Medical Committees Ltd

Our Ref: Gf/LJS/6165

15th September 2020

Dr N Kanani/Mr Waller
NHS England
BY EMAIL

Dear Dr Kanani and Mr Waller,

I am writing to you on behalf of Worcestershire LMC to express my deep concern regarding the recent communication sent to practices from NHSE where practices were reminded to offer face to face appointments to patients where necessary.

It was a mistake in my view for this to have been highlighted to newspapers in advance by NHS England's press office. The widespread coverage in newspapers, including the lead story in Monday's *Telegraph*, which claimed GPs had been 'warned' they must offer face-to-face appointments has dented the morale of our hard-working colleagues, and has not helped to restore public confidence in general practice. The letter itself does not appear to appreciate the efforts of GPs up to this point.

General practice colleagues now desperately require recognition from NHSE and the wider public of the unwavering care that has been provided throughout the pandemic. Many have put themselves at personal risk and indeed some have lost their lives in order to provide that service to patients. They have grappled with remote working, staff absences, risk assessments for staff, IPC, the formation of hubs, understanding new IT systems, disrupted supplies of PPE and ever changing advice and instruction.

As our local hospitals have transferred work from their doors to our own, we have continued to meet the backlog of care in our practices and to manage our own patient demand. You may be interested to see a recent survey of practices which shows the level of additional work local practices are absorbing without any increased funding or resource from secondary care. I have attached it for you at the end of this letter.

There are no practices in Worcestershire, to my knowledge, who have not continued to consult with patients since the start of the pandemic. We are following the government's instruction to triage patients remotely and are using our clinical judgement to determine the most appropriate means of assessing patients. That may be through telephone or online consultation or it may be face to face.

/Continued...

My colleagues are exhausted as we head into a potential second wave of covid and what they need more than anything now is to feel valued and supported and indeed trusted.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gillian Farmer
Worcestershire LMC Secretary

cc Dave Briggs, RO